

Message Text

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ORIGIN AID-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AF-06 /024 R

66606

DRAFTED BY:AFR/CWR/SDU:JKELLY

APPROVED BY:AFR/CWR:DSHEAR

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R 241540Z FEB 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

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ROME FOR SKILES PASS OSRO/DABELL AFDROUGHT

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION TO SECSTATE INFO DAKAR FEB 19, 1975
FROM NOUAKCHOTT REPEATED TO YOU:

QUOTE U N C L A S S I F I E D NOUAKCHOTT 0326

AIDAC

E.O. 11152: N/A

SUBJECT: VIEWS ONSHORT TERM ASSISTANCE NEEDS IN SAHEL

REF: STATE 016090

1. TOTAL DONOR ACTIONS IN MAURITANIA, PARTICULARLY IN GRAIN CONTRIBUTIONS, WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN STAVING OFF STARVATION OF LARGE NUMBAR POPULACE. INCREAUED PRECIPITATION DURING LATTER 1974, IN COMPARISON WITH FOUR PREVIOUS YEARS, RESULTED IN INCREASED HARVEST PROSPECTS. THIS DID INCREASE CONFIDENCE, PARTICULARLY OF FARMERS/HERDERS, THAT DROUGHT WAS QUOTE OVER UNQUOTE. PRINCIPAL GIRM OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, RELUCTANT MAKE THIS ASSUMPTION. KARMERHERDER CONFIDENCE IS EVIDENCED BY LARGE NUMBERS THESE NOMADS MOVING FROM THEIR ENCAMPMENTS AROUND POPULATION CENTERS TO ORIGINAL HOME AREAU.

GIRM EFFORTS ON AREAS MENTIONED IN REFTEL FOLLOWS:

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A. FOOD PREPOSITIONING: MINHEALTH, IN ROLE AS COORDINATOR FOR EMERGENCY PROGRAMS, HAS ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS GRAIN TRANSPORT CHIEF TO PREPARE FOR MOVEMENT OF 60,000 MT GRAIN DURING JANUARY-SEPTEMBER PERIOD, BOTH FOR PURPOSES OF IMMEDIATE FOOD CONSUMPTION AND FOR PRE-POSITIONING PURPOSES. DETAILED PLANS OF EXACT QUANTITIES TO BE TRANSPORTED EACH REGION ARE STILL BEING WORKED ON AT MINISTER LEVEL. PLANS ARE TO BE FINALIZED IN FEBRUARY 1975. MOVEMENT, HOWEVER, OF FOOD GRAIN HAS BEGUN IN SMALL QUANTITIES AND WILL BE WITHIN CONTEXT OF OVERALL PLAN FOR FOOD DISTRIBUTION.

MAJOR PROBLEM IN PREPOSITIONING REMAINS THAT OF TRANSPORT. GIRM TRUCK FLEET CONTINUES SHOW EVIDENCE SIZEABLE PERCENT OF VEHICLES OUT OF SERVICE FOR REPAIR DUE DIFFICULT ROADCLIMATIC CONDITIONS. AS RESULT OF NUMEROUS DONORS CONTRIBUTING VARIOUS BRANDS OF TRUCKS, SPARE PART PROBLEM IS COMPLEX. DROUGHT MAINTENANCE FACILITY FINANCED BY UNICEF AND USAID (WITH PARTICIPATION OF GERMAN AID) NOT YET BEGUN DUE LACK DECISION BY GIRM ON FINAL GARAGE PLAN. MINHEALTH EXPECTS THIS DECISION SHORTLY. UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, COMPLETION OF GARAGE WILL HAVE APPRECIABLE EFFECT ON MAINTENANCE DURING COMING TRANSPORT SEASON.(

MINHEALTH EMPHASIZED THAT ALTHOUGH THERE ARE HOPES FOR GOOD CROP HARVESTS THIS YEAR, CAUTION MUST BE TAKEN. AS AN ASSURANCE, MINHEALTH PLANS IMPLEMENT PRABAPOSITIONING TO MORE REMOTE AREAS IN CASE CROP ANTICIPATIONS PROVE INACCURATE, THUS NECESSITATING USE OF THESE PRE-POSITIONED RESERVES FOR CONSUMPTION BY POPULACE. MINISTER INTENDS UTILIZE MOST STOCKS IN COUNTRY FOR CONSUMPTION, USING PIPELINE SHIPMENTS ON ARRIVAL FOR RESERVES, TOGETHER WITH ANY EXCESSES OVER LOCAL CONSUMPTION IN FOOD PRODUCING AREAS.

B. DISEASE INCIDENCE MONITORING: CONVERSATIONS WITH MINHEALTH, HEALTH MINISTRY OFFICIALS AND WHO PERSONNEL INDICATE THAT DISEASE MONITORING SYSTEM EXISTS AND IS OPERATIONAL. REPORTS ARE TRANSMITTED BY RADIO FROM REGIONS TO MINISTRY. WHO PERSONNEL EVALUATED SYSTEM AS SATISFACTORY, AND BOTH MINISTRY AND WHO FELT REPORTS WOULD ENABLE PREVENTIVE ACTION BE TAKEN ON TIMELY UNCLASSIFIED

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BASIS. MINHEALTH COMMENTED THAT MAURITANIA HAD HAD LITTLE PAST EXPERIENCE OF EPIDEMICS EVEN WHEN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES EXPERIENCED THEM. HE STATED THIS DUE TO CLIMATE AND, PREVIOUSLY, TO SCATTERED NOMAD POPULATION. POPULATION IS NOW MORE CONCENTRATED AND, WITH RESTRICTED DIETS, IT IS MORE VULNERABLE TO SOME DISEASES. HE COMMENTED THAT WIDESPREAD VACCINATION PROGRAM BEING CARRIED ON AS WELL AS PROVISION OF VITAMINS TO AFFECTED GROUPS. WHO FELT

AVAILABLE VACCINE STOCKS IN COUNTRY ADEQUATE FOR HANDLING PROBLEM.

C. PROTECTION OF IN-COUNTRY DONATED FOOD SUPPLIES.

MINHEALTH AGREED ON NEED FUMIGATE NOUAKCHOTT, ROSSO, AND REGIONAL WAREHOUSES HOLDING RESERVE STOCKS. ASSESSMENT BY OSRO EXPERT OF STOCKS AT ROSSO AND NOUAKCHOTT INDICATES MOST STOCKS WILL NOT NEED FUMIGATION IF MOVED WITHIN TWO MONTHS TO FIELD. NECESSARY FUMIGATION AT NOUAKCHOTT AND ROSSO WOULD BE DONE OUTSIDE WAREHOUSES, SINCE STOCKS ARE TO BE MOVED OUT RAPIDLY. WAREHOUSES THESE POINTS WOULD BE FUMIGATED WHENEVER NEW RESERVE STOCKS ARRIVE. STOCKS MOVED FROM THESE POINTS WITHIN NEXT TWO MONTHS WOULD EITHER BE ISSUED FOR CONSUMPTION OR FUMIGATED IF PLACED IN WAREHOUSES AS PART OF WAREHOUSE RESERVE FUMIGATION PROGRAM. PLAN USE INITIAL SERIES OF FUMIGATIONS FOR TRAINING GIRM PERSONNEL IN FUMIGATION TECHNIQUES, SINCE PRESENTLY NO IN-COUNTRY CAPABILITY THIS FIELD. WILL CONTINUE EMPHASIZE NEED REGULAR FUMIGATION PROGRAM IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN STOCKS IN PROPER CONDITION.

D. PLANT PROTECTION STRATEGY TO MINIMIZE 1975 CROP

LOSSES: GIRM OFFICIALS, PARTICULARLY MINRURAL DEVELOPMENT, AWARE OF NEED FOR PROTECTION OF CROPS DURING 1975. WFP REP HERE WORKING WITH GIRM OFFICIALS ON THIS. INFORMED BY MINHEALTH THAT PESTICIDES ALREADY ON ORDER BY MINRURAL DEVELOPMENT.

A. CONTINGENCY MEASURES TO ACCOMMODATE NOMADIC GROUPS WHICH MAY CONGREGATE FOR ASSISTANCE DURING APRIL-SEPTEMBER 75: AS OUTLINED IN PARA (A) ABOVE, FOOD STOCK RESERVES (PRE-POSITIONED) TO BE USED FOR SUCH CONTINGENCIES. ALSO EACH URBAN CENTER HAS CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR CERTAIN AREAS TO BE BLOCKED OFF FOR NOMADIC UNCLASSIFIED

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ENCAMPMENTS IF THIS IS NEEDED.

2. EXPERIENCE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PROVE GOOD TEACHER FOR HOST GOVERNMENT IN STRENGTHENING ITS RESPONSE CAPABILITY. MAJOR PROBLEM REMAINS, HOWEVER, OF SO FEW OFFICIALS CHARGED WITH TOO MANY RESPONSIBILITIES. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY BY THESE OFFICIALS IS NOT COMMON DUE TO THIN INFRASTRUCTURE. TO IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE, TRAINING OF PERSONNEL ESSENTIAL. ANOTHER POSSIBLE MEANS OF FOCUSING GIRM'S ATTENTION ON PROBLEMS IS BY A UNITED DONOR EFFORT WHICH HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT LACKING IN PAST. WFP REP INSTRUMENTAL IN KEEPING MINHEALTH AWARE OF GRAIN PROBLEMS. THIS IS HOWEVER, INADEQUATE IN VIEW OF TOTAL SCOPE OF PROBLEMS. DONOR COORDINATION NOW TAKING SHAPE BUT ON INFORMAL BASIS AND NOT FULLY ORCHESTRATED WITH GIRM.

3. GIRM INTEREST IN IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM EVIDENCED
BY ITS PROJECT PROPOSAL TO AFDB IN 1974 FOR PURCHASE OF
RADIO EQUIPMENT. THIS PROJECT, IF APPROVED, WOULD IMPROVE
RADIO CONNECTION BETWEEN NOUAKCHOTT AND REMOTE REGIONS OF
MAURITANIA. SHINN UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISASTER RELIEF, SAHEL, AFDROUGHT, FOOD ASSISTANCE, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE040777
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: AFR/CWR/SDU:JKELLY
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750065-0515
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750218/aaaaapxy.tel
Line Count: 175
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN AID
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 016090
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 MAY 2003 by RuthemTJ>; APPROVED <21 JAN 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VIEWS ONSHORT TERM ASSISTANCE NEEDS IN SAHEL
TAGS: EAID
To: ROME
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006